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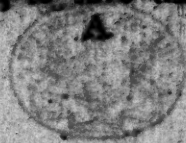
## L E T T E R

T O

## A Certain BARONET.

DEAR SIR,

**T**HE last letter I wrote you was for the good of your soul. To persons who have led such lives as you and I have done, it is an act of friendship to point out such a necessitous and contented apostle as poor Dishington was, with his wife and three children, on twenty pounds a-year: for let the Protestants say what they please, a conscience that is overloaded with sins, feels some ease and comfort in the practice of good works. I don't know but the advice I am now going to give you may help you to Heaven too, if you will but follow it, as I hope you will; for I believe you are not yet very well assured of your admittance there. As you have had your full swing of indulgence in all the pleasures of this world, and are now grown old, as well as gouty and infirm, it is time you were thinking of another, as I have been doing for several years. That you may have leisure for meditating on mortality, and may actually die in peace, I would have you, my dear Baronet, to withdraw yourself from politics, as I have likewise done for several years past. Mine, indeed, were but on a small scale, like my sins; for I have never been rich enough to be either so wicked or so ambitious as you have been, or as my own nature would have led me to; for which I now thank God. But besides your interest in the next world, which I very much desire you to have an eye to, there are other solid reasons for leaving the great circle of business. You have played too long, my dear Baronet, and you had better cut out in time, to save the remains of your money and



and your credit, now that the run is against you. It is true, that Campbell, who took one set of your burghs from you, is pining in a Yankee jail; and God knows where Masterton is, (though I hope in a very good place, as he was charitable to the poor, and kind to his relations.) It was a great shame to you, by the by, Laurie, and it is a sin that will go very hard with you, if you don't repent, to drop poor Masterton in his latter days, who was a very honest fellow, who had served you so faithfully, and was the best friend you ever had; but the gout, and opposition, and their sins, are apt to make greater men than you fretful and peevish.

I know you gamesters are all superstitious, and, from the fate of Campbell, you will be apt to imagine that the luck is coming about, and that you will at least be able to hold your own; but I can assure you, that will prove a very sad deception. The young Nobleman who appears openly against you, is but one of a great number who have sworn to bring you down; and if you should beat him, (which I don't think at all probable, considering what kind of mettle he is made of), you'll find you have a score such as he to fight with, one after another. Next to the taking of m—d—n—ds, I know nothing that we old fellows should shun so carefully as contests with young people. Besides every other advantage they have, the jilt Fortune, with all other females, is constantly on their side. You acquired a very princely fortune, to be sure, and you wished to be a great man on the merit of it. You took a very different line from your brother Commissary O—d, who chose to conceal the extent of his riches, and to play the patriot by improving his estate. You followed another road; and I don't blame you for that, for I should have done so myself had I been as rich as you. You entered the lists of politics, and took upon you to contend with all the nobles of the land. You succeeded beyond your own most sanguine expectations; for you was yet young, and had not exposed your defects. The folly of some leading men, and a phrenzy that town and country were seized with about the canal, gave you the command of the capital. From that moment you became really powerful; and if you could have preserved the smallest degree of moderation in the exercise of your power, you might have kept it to your dying days: but you had not sense enough for that; you was seized with the disease of upstarts, and of weak minds in prosperity; you grew insolent. Was it not enough (coming from where you came) for  
you





you to insult all the ancient nobility with your unbounded luxury and ostentation, but you must make them feel the arm of your power also? You thwarted, you disappointed, you affronted them all in their turns. This was very foolish in you, my dear Laurie! For such a fellow as you to have power, was provoking enough. The least thing to have been expected from you, was mildness and complaisance in the exercise of it. I really wonder they bore you so long; you might have bowed, and fawned, and lied, and cheated; for none of those would have misbecome you. But it was too much for you to take the place of the first Nobles of the land, and then kick and cuff about you, or spit and piss upon them into the bargain. It is never too late to be wise; let me advise my old friend to retire in time. I mentioned a Noble Duke, who I believe to be an invincible spirit; I mentioned also a combination: but you have much worse than that against you, *the opinion of mankind*; which, without covenant or agreement, is much more dangerous and fatal than any combination. It works slowly, it is true, but it is sure; for it never can be betrayed. All men have long been sensible, that you are in the place where you ought not to be; and you'll find *that* a mine which has already sapped your foundation. But you may say in reply, Well done, brother Baronet! who has less right to give advice than you have, whose whole conduct has been perfectly absurd? you who have wheeled a dozen times in your life, and always a day too late; when the friends you left were just coming into power, and those you joined, on the point of being turned out? You who were so ambitious—Hold, my good friend! It is all true you say; but experience teaches fools; and that of itself gives me a right to advise.

In spite of all your airs, I really hope that there is a change in your mind, and that you are preparing for an handsome retreat. Instead of coming down yourself this year, you have only sent your son; and that so late in the season, that every body must see that you only mean to save appearances to please your old friends, but don't intend to hold the Good Town any longer, otherwise you would pay it more respect and attention. And as I think you are beginning to lower the sails of your ambition, I am very glad to see that you have struck the flag of your pride. You have sent down Tommy to keep an *allum-shop* in the Lawnmarket. This is a certain proof to me, that you aim at being no higher than you are;

are ; for you and I know a secret about that. Besides, in case of accidents, it will be a secure retreat for your family. Many animals, they say, and some races of men too, always make the greatest effort they can to die in the holes where they were born. I should be very sorry, however, if this motion of yours towards an Edinburgh shop, should prove a presage of your death ; for I most sincerely wish you to live and repent.

When you come down next, give me a visit, and I'll teach you one virtue which you much need, that of mortification ; for I am as poor as a rat, and have lived on Solon geese all this season, a bird that you great men consider only as a whet. But I begin to have a clear conscience, and much less gout than usual.

Wishing you the same, I am, in all meekness and love, my dear Baronet, &c.

*Scart Point, September 2. 1777.*

P. S. If you knew what it was to have an old house fall about your ears, as I do, you would not be at such deadly wars with the hammermen.

P. S. 2. If you have done nothing yet for my poor saint Dis-  
 ington, the Lord have mercy on your soul !

